

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Control: 9417

Rec'd: September 13, 1962
8:19 a.m.

FROM: Belgrade

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 331, September 13, Noon

MCGB

George Kennan on the
TASS Statement.

DK

ACTION DEPARTMENT 331, INFORMATION MOSCOW 14

At risk of overstepping my immediate competence, would like to offer following comment on our reaction to Soviet Government's threat about Cuba:

Statements of Secretary Rusk and Senator Mansfield seem to me right down the line and President's statements in Rice University speech were obviously masterful. I am disturbed, however, by suggestion of State Department spokesman Reap that Russian declaration was in effect only propaganda, and not to be taken seriously. I see that this theme has been taken up and repeated by Wireless File commentator Ford.

Have long argued generally against use of shopworn and meaningless cliche "just propaganda" as routine device for disposing of Soviet statements; but in present instance I consider it particularly malapropos. Soviet Government is government of a great power. As such it should be required to bear heaviest responsibility for words or gestures which bring instability into INTL relations and threaten world peace. It should not, instances of this sort, be told that no one takes it seriously and thus be encouraged to conclude it can continue to enjoy all severages of adventurous and provocative behavior without having to accept any of attendant responsibility. When Soviet leaders threaten to use their military power to settle world war if we move to defend our security and peace of Western Hemisphere, this is profoundly serious matter. Neither world opinion nor Soviet Government itself should, it seems to me, be encouraged to do anything else.

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**Trust Department and Embassy Moscow will forgive this intrusion
into their proper concerns.**

KENNAN

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